

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated January 21, 2003, claims 6-11 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Claims 1-27 are rejected under 35 USC §102(e).

For the reasons set forth hereafter, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in the claims is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed and, further, includes features which are not anticipated by the cited references. Reconsideration is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Applicants' attorney would like to thank Patent Examiner D. Bochna for his time and courtesies extending during a personal interview conducted on April 3, 2003. During the interview, proposed amendments to the independent claims, as substantially set forth herein, were discussed with the Examiner.

Claims 6-11 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. The terminology noted by the Examiner has been revised to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of Applicants' invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 6-11 and 16-18 particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention as required by 35 USC §112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-27 are rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Snyder. The Examiner contends that Snyder discloses all of the features of Applicants' invention. However, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent claims 1, 12, 16, 19, and 23 includes features which are not anticipated by Snyder.

Briefly, Snyder discloses a pipe coupling with a toothed retainer having a plurality of inward angled teeth which engage a pipe end in a direction to resist withdrawal of the pipe end from a fitting or housing. The locking teeth projection from a cylindrical surface of the retainer. Other radially outward angled teeth engage the retainer with the fitting.

The Examiner notes that Snyder, in column 4, lines 54-56, states: "It is again another object of the invention to provide a coupling which maintains good electrical conductivity across the joint." However, a careful review of the entire Snyder fails to uncover any other description of the use of the retainer to maintain good electrical conductivity across the joint. All that can be gleaned from Snyder is that the

fitting, pipe and retainer are formed of metal such that the connection of the angled teeth on the retainer with the pipe and the fitting provide a metal-metal connection through the retainer.

Applicants' invention as defined in the independent claims also utilizes a retainer to releasably latch an endform in a connector housing. However, the electrical contact of Applicants' invention is mounted in the connector housing between the housing and the endform separately from the retainer. The contact establishes an electrical connection between the endform and the connector housing.

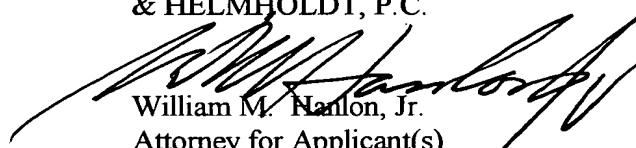
Thus, Applicants' invention differs from Snyder in that the electrical connection between the connector and the endform is achieved separate from the retainer used to releasably latch the endform in the connector housing.

Since Snyder is devoid of any electrical connection between the fitting and pipe separate from the retainer used to latch the fitting and pipe together, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' invention set forth in independent claims 1, 12, 16, 19, and 23, as well as the claims depending respectively therefrom, include features which are not anticipated by Snyder or any of the additionally cited, but not applied references, all of which utilize a metal-metal connection through a retainer to latch a pipe in a fitting.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in claims 1-27 is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed and, further, includes features which are not anticipated by the cited reference. As such, it is submitted that claims 1-27 are in condition for allowance; a notice of which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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